

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method for activating a two-stage switching valve (7) comprising a first stage having a smaller flow cross section and a second stage having a larger flow cross section, the switching valve being situated between a main brake cylinder (4) and a hydraulic pump (9) in a hydraulic brake system (17), wherein the switching valve (7) is activated in a first phase (A) by a control signal (20) having a small amplitude (22) to first open only the first stage of the switching valve (7) for a predetermined period of time, and activated in a second phase (B) by a control signal (20) having a higher amplitude (21).
2. The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the control signal (20) is temperature- and voltage-compensated.
3. The method as recited in Claim 1 or 2, wherein the differential pressure prevailing at the switching valve (7) is determined, and the multiphase activation operation is carried out only within a predetermined pressure range.
4. The method as recited in Claim 3, wherein the pressure range lies between at least 10 bar and 30 bar, and in particular between 5 bar and 35 bar.
5. The method as recited in one of the preceding claims, wherein the control signal (20) has a magnitude in the first phase (A) such that the first stage of the switching valve (7) is open for at least 10 ms, preferably at least 30 ms, before the second stage opens.
6. The method as recited in one of the preceding claims, wherein the second phase (B) begins no earlier than 30 ms after the beginning of the first phase (A).